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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LISBON 000624

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TAGS: [ENRG](#) [SENV](#) [KGHG](#) [EUN](#) [PO](#)
SUBJECT: PORTUGAL SUPPORTS IPCC LANGUAGE TO REDUCE GHG
EMISSIONS BY 25-40%

REF: STATE 24257

Classified By: Dep P/E Couns Cari Enav for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

¶1. (C) EU member states, including Portugal, strongly support Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) language suggesting Annex 1 countries collectively reduce their emissions by 25-40% by 2020, according to a high-ranking Environment Ministry official who characterized the proposal as realistic and science-based. Political momentum within the EU to address climate change is irreversible, he noted, with several NGOs criticizing European policy makers for not being ambitious enough. Regardless of which scenario is chosen, the EU is endeavoring to de-carbonize emissions by 2050. Our contact reiterated the EU's well-known position that developed nations must lead by example in the fight against climate change. He noted that Portugal was pleased with the Major Economies Process but that some member states were disappointed with the Honolulu meeting, where he claimed US and Chinese officials failed to acknowledge the progress achieved at the Bali Conference.

Political Momentum Irreversible

¶2. (C) On March 11, Deputy Pol/Econ Counselor delivered reftel points to Fausto Brito e Abreu, Advisor to the Environment Secretary of State Humberto Rosa. Brito e Abreu responded that political momentum within the EU to combat climate change is irreversible, with all member states, including Portugal, strongly supporting IPCC language that Annex 1 countries (developed nations) collectively reduce emissions by 25-40% by 2020, compared to 1990 levels. He assured us that he would pass US concerns to the Prime Minister's office but doubted they would influence Portugal's position. While acknowledging that Russia and Canada shared concerns similar to ours, he commented that the US is relatively isolated in its position and noted that Australia had recently come to see the EU perspective. Brito e Abreu insisted that the IPCC scenario was realistic and science-based, emphasizing that past results had shown that "when there's a will, there's a way." Furthermore, EU climate change policy supported the IPCC scenario goal as member states had committed to reducing GHG emissions by 30% by 2020, compared to 1990 levels, as long as other industrialized nations did the same.

Leading by Example

¶3. (U) Brito e Abreu reiterated the EU's well-known position

that developed nations have a moral obligation to lead the fight against climate change. Leading by example, he argued, would encourage India, China and other developing nations to follow suit. He said that Portugal does not support nationally determined targets as such an approach would allow countries to be decidedly unambitious. On the other hand, Portugal was particularly supportive of the USG-proposed sectoral approach as it presented the greatest opportunity to obtain "the necessary" developing country buy-in.

De-Carbonizing by 2050

¶4. (U) Despite the differences, Portugal is pleased with the USG's active engagement and welcomed further discussions on alternate scenarios proposed by the IPCC, Brito e Abreu said. Regardless of what scenario is chosen, it is important for the EU and others to de-carbonize (zero percent) emissions by 2050 in order to limit the rise in global temperature to 2 degrees Fahrenheit.

Backtracking at the MEM??

¶5. (C) Portugal is pleased with the Major Economies Process although some member states, Brito e Abreu noted, were disillusioned during the January Hawaii meeting in which some US and Chinese participants spoke as if "Bali had never happened." Both Environment SecState Rosa, who attended the January meeting, and Brito e Abreu plan to attend the April meeting in Paris. Brito e Abreu did not elaborate on the alleged "backtracking" by certain US and Chinese participants.

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Comment

¶6. (C) Brito e Abreu reiterated his satisfaction with increased US engagement in the international effort to combat climate change over the past year but was unconvinced by U.S. concerns. Despite our outlining major US actions and legislation to fight climate change and insisting that the US and EU work together to bring other nations on board, it was clear from our discussion that Europe still feels it is leading the process and hopes that the US will hop on board the EU train under their conditions. We are sharing reftel points with the MFA but note that the Ministry of Environment has the clear lead on this issue within the Portuguese government.
Stephenson